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The Library

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THE LIBRARY

The average student uses the library for two purposes, first, to kill time and second, to read assigned cases.

Occasionally students make only half-hearted attempts to look up questions of law. This is undoubtedly due to their limited knowledge of the facilities offered by the college library.

When your professor gives you a specific citation, for example, *Flannigan vs. Howard*, 200 Ill. 396, every student knows enough to go to the library and ask for volume 200 of the Illinois Supreme Court Reports. But suppose the professor gives you a statement of facts. Then he asks you to decide what questions of law are involved and to cite authorities. Or, better yet, suppose you have just graduated and taken your first position. Your employer calls you into his office and says, "Mr. Jones, a good client of mine, owns a piece of coal land. He went to a broker and employed him to find a purchaser at an agreed commission. Jones told the broker that the C. N. & R. R. R. agreed to run a branch line onto the land which would greatly increase its value. The broker found a purchaser. The purchaser refused to go through with the deal when he found out that the C. N. & R. R. R. did not intend to run a branch line onto the coal land. The broker has brought suit against Jones for his commission. Look up the law and give me a brief on it tomorrow."

You will say "Yes, sir!", and walk out of his office softly closing the door. Then you will start to whistle. You begin looking over his law library. What, no *Corpus Juris*?! What's this set of books,—American Digest? You pull out a volume. That looks kind of complicated—you put it back. Here's Callahan's Illinois Digest. I've heard of

that before. You read for an hour or two. Can't find a case in point. Perhaps that point has never been decided by the Illinois courts. You put it back. Here's some more queer looking volumes. *American Law Reports*, *Annotated*, *Ruling Case Law*, *National Reporter System*. So you go on wasting a lot of time, fumbling around, trying to get started on your brief. The odds are that you will end up by calling for help.

Suppose you hired a carpenter to build a house. He comes on the job with a chest full of brand new tools. He is awkward and bungling in using them. Would you have any confidence in the quality and permanence of his work?

The tools of a lawyer are his law books, i.e. the reports, digests, encyclopedias, indices, text books, annotations, commentaries, etc. Every student owes it to himself to know how to use the tools of his profession. No one can safely rely upon his memory for the law.

There are over 6000 volumes in our library. Roughly speaking the books in the library may be divided into source books and search books. The first class consists of statutes and reports of judicial decisions for example, *Cahill's Illinois Revised Statutes* and the *Illinois Supreme Court Reports*. The second class consists of the text books, digests, indices, encyclopedias, dictionaries, annotations, citators, etc. These are often called the law-finders. Examples of this class are *American Digest System*, *American Law Reports Annotated*, *Corpus-Juris-Cyc*, and *Ruling Case Law*.

Students should feel at liberty to ask the members of the faculty or the librarian any questions that occur to them concerning the use of books in the library.

John A. Gordon, Librarian.